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Steadfast Consideration Urged for Mason Tract Drilling Proposal

Sen. Stamas Urging Caution While Officials Contemplate Oil and Gas Plan

(LANSING) – State and federal officials are currently considering a proposal to drill for oil and gas beneath the Mason Tract in Crawford County, and today Sen. Tony Stamas, R-Midland, introduced a resolution urging the departments involved to exercise extra diligence while considering the proposal.

“Many local residents and organizations have expressed concern over the impacts on natural resources for this drilling proposal beneath the Mason Tract, and I would like to urge state and federal officials to recognize this concern and exercise careful consideration while evaluating the proposal,” said Stamas.

The recent announcement of plans to drill for oil and gas near the AuSable River has generated widespread concern. The plans call for directional drilling in order to gain access to minerals beneath the parcel of land in the Huron Manistee National Forest. This land had been previously donated to the state under the condition that it remains safe from development.

Residents who consider the Mason Tract to be a pristine area that should be preserved from the impacts of drilling have expressed concern about the possible negative impact on one of the last remaining near-wilderness areas left in the Lower Peninsula. In addition, outdoor sports groups feel that certain activities involved with drilling could be harmful to one of Michigan’s most cherished fishing areas.

“It is imperative that the voices of the local residents in the area be heard in this critical process,” said Stamas. “The characteristics of the Huron Manistee National Forest and the Mason Tract are such that extra caution and time should be taken at each step of the permit review process, and I urge the officials involved to exercise this caution and not make a decision in haste.”

Senate Concurrent Resolution 28 urges the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Department of Natural Resources, the United States Forest Service and the United States Bureau of Land Management to exercise extra diligence and explore all options while considering the proposal in order to minimize the environmental impact on the area.

SCR 28 has been referred to the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs.